In the claims:

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Twice Amended) A method for assessing a compound's ability to prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition, comprising:

a) contacting a compound with cultured neuronal cells having activated MLK activity;

b) determining the number of cultured neuronal cells that die;

wherein a decreased number of dead cultured neuronal cells in the presence of the compound compared to the number of dead cultured neuronal cells in the absence of the compound is indicative of the compound's ability to prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition.

9. (Once Amended) A method for assessing a compound's ability to prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition, comprising:

a) contacting a compound with cultured neuronal cells transfected with a mutated protein or treated with a neurotoxin that induces neuronal cell death; and

b) determining the number of cultured neuronal cells that die;

wherein a decreased number of dead cultured neuronal cells in the presence of the compound compared to the number of dead cultured neuronal cells in the absence of the compound is indicative of the compound's ability to prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition.

14. (Twice Amended) A method for assessing the ability of a MLK inhibitor to prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition, comprising:

a) contacting a MLK inhibitor with cultured neuronal cells having activated MLK activity;

b) contacting, in the presence of the compound, surviving cells from step (a) with an agent that induces apoptosis; and

c) comparing the level of apoptosis in the [cell] cells in the presence of the MLK inhibitor with the level of apoptosis in the [cell] cells in the absence of the MLK inhibitor;

wherein the MLK inhibitor is a potentially useful drug for treating the mammal when the level of apoptosis in the [cell] cells in the presence of the MLK inhibitor is less than the level of apoptosis in the [cell] cells in the absence of the MLK inhibitor.

19. (Once Amended) A method for screening a compound's ability to inhibit MLK activity and thereby prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neuroiogicai condition, comprising:

a) contacting a compound with a MLK protein and substrate therefor;

b) measuring the level of MLK activity;

c) comparing the level of MLK activity in the presence of the compound with the level of MLK activity in the absence of the compound, wherein a decrease in MLK activity in the presence of the compound is indicative that the compound is a MLK inhibitor;

d) contacting the compound with cultured neuronal cells having activated MLK activity; and

e) comparing the occurrence of apoptosis in the [cell] cells in the presence of the compound with the occurrence of apoptosis in the [cell] cells in the absence of the MLK inhibitor;

wherein the MLK inhibitor is a potentially useful drug for treating the mammal when the occurrence of apoptosis in the[cell] cells in the presence of the MLK inhibitor is less than the occurrence of apoptosis in the [cell] cells in the absence of the MLK inhibitor.

27. (Once Amended) The method of Claim 24, wherein the phosphorylated product of step (b) is [phosphorylated c-Jun or] phosphorylated SEK1.